

CLAIM LISTING:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of polyamines of the diphenylmethane series, comprising

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- and
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,
- and
- c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and an aqueous phase,

wherein the quantity of base in step b) exceeds 100% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization of the reaction mixture, and wherein at least one alcohol is present during and/or added (1) at the beginning of step b), (2) during step b), or (3) after the neutralization step b) and before step c), with the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde being at least 0.02:1.

Claims 2-7 (Canceled).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended) ~~The A process of Claim 1 for the preparation of polyamines of the diphenylmethane series, additionally~~ comprising

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,

c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase and an aqueous phase,

and

d) adding said alcohol and an additional quantity of a base to the organic phase formed in c),

and

e) phase separating the alkaline reaction mixture from d) into an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and an aqueous phase,

wherein the quantity of base added in step d) exceeds 1% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization and in which the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde is at least 0.02:1.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended) The process of Claim 1, wherein the said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 10 (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of polyisocyanates of the diphenylmethane series comprising

a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,

b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,

and

- c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and an aqueous phase,
and
- d) phosgenating the resultant polyamines into the corresponding polyisocyanates,

wherein the quantity of base in step b) exceeds 100% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization of the reaction mixture, and wherein at least one alcohol is present during and/or added (1) at the beginning of step b), (2) during step b), or (3) after the neutralization step b) and before step c), with the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde being at least 0.02:1.

Claims 12-17 (Canceled).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended) The A process for the preparation of polyisocyanates of Claim 11 of the diphenylmethane series, additionally comprising:

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,
- c) d) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase and an aqueous phase,
and
- d) adding said at least one alcohol and an additional quantity of a base to the organic phase, prior to said phosgenation
- e) phase separating the alkaline reaction mixture from d) into an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and into an aqueous phase,
and

f) phosgenating the organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series to yield the corresponding polyisocyanates,
wherein the quantity of base added in step d) exceeds 1% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization and in which the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde is at least 0.02:1.

Claim 19 (Original) The process of Claim 11, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 20 (Original) The process of Claim 11, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 21 (New) The process of Claim 8, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 22 (New) The process of Claim 8, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 23 (New) The process of Claim 18, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 24 (New) The process of Claim 18, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.